

Prevent a fall in hospital

Information for patients and families



Did you know?

- Falls are the cause of 57% of all injury-related hospital admissions.
- Falls are the leading cause of injury hospitalization for Saskatchewan youth under 20.
- One in three older adults falls each year; one in two over the age of 80 will fall.
- 90% of all hip fractures in older adults are the result of a fall and osteoporosis.
- The average length of stay in hospital is much longer for falls injuries.
- Falls and their injuries are preventable.

Reduce the risk of a fall:

- Bring non-skid shoes for walking.
- Bring your walking aids to the hospital with you. Keep them nearby to move about safely.
- Keep personal items within reach (i.e. glasses, books).
- Wear your glasses and hearing aids. Ensure they are in good working order.
- Improve your strength by sitting up in a chair or going for a walk. Always ask for help to get out of bed.

Falls often happen on the way to the bathroom.

- Always call for help to get to the bathroom.
- Keep pathways free of clutter.
- Turn on your night light to go to the bathroom when it is dark.
- Keep your call bell within reach.
- Keep your bed at the height the staff have placed it.
- Check that the brakes are on the bed or wheelchair before you sit or

Be aware of the common risks for falls:

Previous falls Please let staff know if you have fallen in the past few months.

Illness or infection Can make you unsteady and weak. Being in the hospital can cause confusion and memory problems. Talk to staff about any concerns you have about this.

Hydration and nutrition Drink plenty of fluids and make sure you eat enough fiber.

Medication A change in medication can make you drowsy. Ask if the medicine you are taking has this side effect.

Vitamin D and calcium are important for bone strength. Ask your doctor to decide how much you need to take.

Pain Ensure that your pain is under control. Ask your nurse for help if you are in pain.

Environment The hospital is not a familiar place to you:

- Sit up for a few minutes to prevent dizziness before getting out of bed; Use the hand rail and grab bar in the bathroom and tub;
- Keep your walkway well lit;
- Always call for help to go to the bathroom, to get up to sit in a chair or to go for a walk; Use your cane or walker if you have one.

Fear of falling Let a health-care professional know if you are afraid that you may fall.

Inactivity Ask your care team for help to move around. A therapist is here to help you stay active.

Working together to prevent falls

- When you are admitted to the ward you will be asked if you have had a fall this year and if you have difficulty with walking or balance.
- You will be asked to tell the story of your fall(s) and what happened to cause you to fall.
- Your care team will discuss with you and your family how to improve your safety and prevent another fall.
- We will assess if walking aids will improve your safety and independence. If needed, walking aids will be provided for you to use.

